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GRANDVIEW CHEMICAL FIRE UPDATE #5

This morning the chemical fire incident in Grandview has moved into a transition phase. This means that the emergency phase has ended and the likelihood of any hazard to the people of Grandview is over. The area remains closed to the public at this time.

Captain Dave Karnitz, WSP Incident Commander, said "our goal today is to reduce the size of the evacuation area until it is contained entirely on the Wilbur-Ellis property." This will be accomplished with input from the Environmental Protection Agency. "The EPA will be testing air quality in the affected neighborhoods to ensure the safety of Grandview's citizens as they go home. Once the area is declared free of contamination we'll be allowing the residents back in."

So far, the EPA has not found any hazardous contaminants outside the Wilbur-Ellis property. EPA's air monitoring team is now working with the local health district and the City of Grandview to establish a list of priority sampling sites (schools, public buildings, etc.) for inspection prior to re-entry. "This is really for piece-of-mind," said Jeff Rodin, EPA's on-scene coordinator. "We don't expect to find anything, since our sampling overnight was negative. But when it comes to schools, we'd prefer to double-check."

As part of this transition, the command post will be moving from the Sunnyside Police Department to the Grandview Police Department, 201 West Second Street, Grandview.

The chemical fire at the Wilbur-Ellis Chemical Plant (Wine Country Rd., Grandview) started at approximately 12:10 PM Wednesday, January 26. The cause is still under investigation.

The Wilbur-Ellis Company has retained the services of NRC Environmental Services for decontamination of the property and disposal of associated debris. NRC is also providing air monitoring support at the scene.

Media inquiries should be directed to: (509) 882-9229.